



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**Report following monitoring  
Level of follow-up: Estyn monitoring**

**Ysgol Rhiwabon  
Ruabon  
Wrexham  
LL14 6BT**

**Date of visit: January 2016**

**by**

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and  
Training in Wales**

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**The monitoring team**

Delyth Lloyd Gray	Reporting Inspector
Tony Sparks	Team Inspector
Vicky Barlow	Local authority representative

## Outcome of monitoring

Ysgol Rhiwabon is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in January, 2015.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is increasing the level of follow-up activity.

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that special measures are required in relation to this school. The school will draw up an action plan, which shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about three months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Raise standards in key stage 4 and particularly for boys**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, performance at key stage 4 in many indicators has declined. In 2015, performance in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics declined significantly. For two of the last three years, performance in this indicator has been well below modelled outcomes, in 2015 placing the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools based on eligibility for free school meals. Performance in the level 2 threshold improved slightly to above the family average and places the school in the top 25% of similar schools. The capped points score has declined slightly since the time of the core inspection, although it remains above modelled outcomes for the fourth year in succession.

At key stage 4, performance in English declined in 2015. This places the school in the lower 50% of similar schools. Performance in mathematics declined significantly in 2015. It is below the average for the family of schools and places the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools. Performance in science is also well below the family average and places the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools for the fourth consecutive year.

In the level 2 threshold, the performance of boys improved in 2015 and is better than the average for boys in similar schools. However, their performance declined in 2015 in all other key performance indicators. At key stage 4, in 2015, the performance of boys is below the average for boys in the family in many indicators. In 2015, the performance of boys in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics, core subject indicator, mathematics and science is significantly below the family average. No boys achieved five GCSE grades at grade A\* or A in 2015.

The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals at key stage 4 has declined in all indicators since the time of the core inspection. In 2015, the performance of these pupils in the majority of indicators was below the average for this group of pupils in the family of similar schools.

**Recommendation 2: Strengthen the quality of teaching and marking to meet the needs of all pupils and provide clear guidance to help them improve**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

The school recognises the need to improve the quality of teaching but has not made it a high enough priority since the core inspection. As a result, teaching has not had enough impact on raising standards.

The school uses lesson observations and work scrutiny to evaluate teaching but does not focus sufficiently upon the impact that teaching has on pupils' learning and progress. This does not allow the school to make secure judgements on the quality of teaching or to identify accurately the aspects of teaching most in need of improvement. A recently introduced support programme provides teachers with helpful strategies for improving teaching, but does not sufficiently address the specific areas that require improvement.

Most teachers mark work regularly and a majority clearly identify strengths in pupils' work. However, only a minority identify the weaker aspects of pupils' work accurately and provide them with clear, precise guidance on how to improve.

The school has recently introduced the SMART marking strategy to encourage pupils to take responsibility for improving the content and technical accuracy of their work. In a few cases, this helps pupils to improve their work. However, in many cases, pupils lack the skills and knowledge to do this effectively.

Leaders monitor marking on a regular basis and provide feedback to teachers. However, this feedback does not take sufficient account of the impact that marking has on pupils' learning.

**Recommendation 3: Ensure that there is a systematic and progressive whole-school approach to improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has been too slow to implement an appropriate, strategic and progressive approach to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Consequently, the actions that have taken place have not had a sufficient impact on the standard of those skills across the curriculum.

Literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have only been in post since September but have started to put in place suitable classroom resources, including those used during form tutor time. The school has recently identified appropriate opportunities to support the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in most subjects at key stage 3. A majority of departments have made sound progress in updating schemes of work and lesson plans. However, overall this work remains at a very early stage.

Pupils with weaker literacy and numeracy skills are identified through national test results. Intervention programmes to support them are appropriate but have only

been in place for a very short time. Currently, the school does not monitor the quality of provision for developing pupils' skills across the curriculum, or assess the standards of those skills, effectively.

**Recommendation 4: Ensure that middle leaders are held to account robustly for improving outcomes in standards and wellbeing**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

The senior leadership team recognise their role in holding middle leaders to account. However, they do not focus well enough on the important areas that remain in need of significant improvement, including standards and the quality of teaching.

Middle leaders meet regularly with their line managers, and there is greater consistency in the structure of these meetings than at the time of the core inspection. Most middle leaders understand the importance of their role in improving pupil outcomes. However, there remains too much variation in the capacity of middle leaders to bring about the required improvements in standards and wellbeing. Poor standards and low expectations in a minority of subjects have not been challenged robustly enough by senior leaders.

Middle leaders monitor pupil progress through lesson observations and work scrutiny. However, in common with senior leaders, they do not focus well enough upon pupils' achievement and progress in learning. As a result, the ability of all leaders to identify strengths and shortcomings in standards and teaching is limited. This does not allow senior leaders to hold middle leaders to account effectively. As a result, important areas in need of improvement, such as standards in science and mathematics and the performance of boys, have not been sufficiently addressed.

**Recommendation 5: Strengthen improvement planning and ensure that the actions to bring about improvement are sufficiently robust**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, self-evaluation and improvement planning processes have not been effective in securing sufficient improvements in important areas of the schools' work.

Senior and middle leaders are developing an improved understanding of the school's performance against a range of performance indicators. However, their analysis, and particularly their evaluation of performance data, is not sufficiently robust. In addition, the evaluation of the skills and progress of pupils in lessons remains weak.

The school's self-evaluation report does not attach sufficient weight to important areas that require significant improvement such as standards in key stage 4 and the performance of boys. There is not a strong enough focus on evaluating the quality of teaching and learning through rigorous lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work. The views of parents and pupils do not play a full enough role in school and departmental self-evaluation procedures.

The school improvement plan does not set out clear enough timescales to indicate when actions are intended to be completed. There is too much variation in the quality of improvement planning at departmental level. For example, a minority do not incorporate key whole-school priorities, define actions clearly enough or include specific enough timescales. In general, departmental improvement plans do not indicate clearly enough how success will be measured.

### **Recommendation 6: Improve attendance and reduce levels of persistent absence**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, rates of attendance have improved. However, they remain below modelled outcomes and place the school in the lower 50% of similar schools. During this period, persistent absenteeism has reduced by 10 percentage points, but is still above local and national averages.

Unverified data for this academic year to date shows attendance rates to be below those at the same point last year. This is below the whole school target of 93.2% for this academic year and well below the school's aspirational target of 95%. Current unverified attendance data for Year 7, Year 8 and Year 10 is above the school target. However, attendance rates of Year 9 and Year 11 pupils, particularly those of girls, are significantly below.

The school has recently introduced a number of measures to improve attendance and raise awareness of the importance of regular attendance amongst pupils, staff and parents. These include providing staff with detailed data on pupil attendance and the introduction of appropriate daily systems to notify parents of any unreported absences.

Pupils are responding positively to the recently introduced rewards system. However, most of these strategies are in the early stages of development and have not had a significant impact on rates of attendance. The support of the attendance officer, the Education Social Work Service and the very recently appointed school parental engagement officer is enabling the school to improve pupil attendance more effectively. However, the planning and monitoring of interventions are not robust enough. As a consequence, progress in improving attendance is too slow.

### **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.